

1.172.377

PATENT SPECIFICATION

DRAWINGS ATTACHED

1.172.377

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GREAT BRITAIN
GROUP 31
CLASS 28

COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

Food Containers

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We, CEASE CENTRAL INC., a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of New York, United States of America, of 186, Lake Shore Drive West, Dunkirk, New York, United States of America, do hereby declare the invention, for which we pray that a patent may be granted to us, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:—

This invention relates to containers for holding food preparatory to and up to the point of dispensing the same to consumers and wherein all or part of the container comprises the serving dish for the food.

In accordance with the present invention a container for use in handling, dispensing and serving foods comprises the combination of

(a) a food receptacle having a marginal flange with a retention groove extending along the upper surface thereof and a plurality of compartments open at the top and bounded by walls extending above the said marginal flange, and

(b) a service plate adapted to be applied over the said receptacle in inverted position to serve as a cover for the said compartments with the rim of the service plate in releasable snap-in engagement with the said retention groove and with the interior surface of the service plate abutting the upper edges of the said walls to seal the compartments of the said receptacle from each other and from the surrounding atmosphere.

The containers of the present invention are of particular advantage for use in conjunction with automated food service apparatus. The container construction and arrangement disclosed herein may be securely nested or stacked and may be conveniently and safely separated from a stack or tier of receptacles by mechanical means provided for that purpose.

The container of the present invention has a holder or receptacle having an inverted ser-

vice plate acting as a cover for the holder and may be provided with means on both elements enabling the positive separation of the same in the process of dispensing the food, such dispensing including an inverting step for transferring the food from the holder to the service plate.

One embodiment of a food package according to the present invention is illustrated by way of example in the accompanying drawing and described in detail below.

Referring to the drawing:
Fig. 1 is a perspective view of one form of food holder or receptacle unit of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a service plate adapted to serve as a cover for the holder or receptacle of Fig. 1, and

Fig. 3 is a cross sectional view taken approximately on the line III—III of Fig. 1 showing the holder of Fig. 1 and the service plate of Fig. 2 in assembled relation to make up one form of food container in accordance with the present invention. Figs. 1 and 2 are schematic views, the constructional details of the two parts being shown more clearly in Fig. 3.

Like characters of reference denote like parts throughout the several figures of the drawing. The container shown in Figs. 1 through 3 comprises a holder designated generally by the reference numeral 10 and comprising a flat panel portion 11 having integral compartments 12, 13 and 14 and a marginal ledge or bead 15 at its upper surface, the ledge 15 being undercut along its inner side to form a retention groove.

In Figs. 2 and 3 a service plate is designated 18 and ribs 19 and 20 therein divide the same into areas corresponding to and adapted to register with the compartments 12, 13 and 14. If desired, the rib 19 may fit between the containers 12, 13 and 14 as shown in Fig. 3 to assist in locating service plate 18 with respect to holder 10.

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The rim of plate 18 is adapted to snap into the undercut portion of ledge 15 as clearly shown in Fig. 3. In the present instance the holder 10 may be of aluminum and the service plate 18 of plastic material which is slightly flexible to facilitate snap-in assembly. In some instances the plates 18 may be relatively inflexible, as when they are china, glass or other ceramic material. In such case the holder will preferably be of plastic or other flexible material to permit such assembly.

In the present embodiment of the invention the assembled holders and plates need not be stacked in a continuous vertical stack excepting for transportation or other handling preliminary to the actual vending or dispensing thereof. When they are positioned for dispensing the containers may comprise a tier of vertically spaced separately supported containers as in the apparatus of United States Patent No. 3,241,709, dated March 22, 1966. Furthermore, in this embodiment the assembled holders and plates are intended to be inverted prior to separation and ultimate dispensing of food on the service plate, likewise as shown in patent No. 3,241,709, and the holder 10 may be disposed of as contemplated in that application.

In the form of the present invention illustrated in Figs. 1, 2 and 3 the bottom wall of service plate 18 is extended at opposite sides to form projecting flanges 21 which facilitate separation of the resiliency engaged holders and plates. The mechanical means for effecting this separation in co-operation with flanges 21 of plate 18 and the outer margins of holder 10 may be, for instance, as illustrated in Fig. 10 of patent No. 3,241,709.

Referring to Fig. 3 it will be noted that compartment 12 includes a well portion having rib formations for supporting solid food above the well portion, as in Figs. 1, 2, 7, 11, 12 and 13 of United States Patent No. 3,240,610, dated March 15, 1966. Also, the

compartment 13 has integrally molded up-standing tapered pin or pyramid formations spaced uniformly about its bottom interior surface as at 16 in Fig. 3 for supporting food such as peas above such bottom wall whereby butter or other semi-liquid dressing may be contained in the lower part of the compartment prior to inversion thereof.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. A container for use in handling, dispensing and serving prepared foods, comprising the combination of

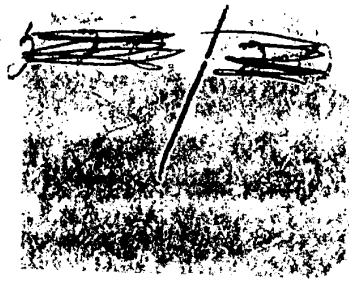
(a) a food receptacle having a marginal flange with a retention groove extending along the upper surface thereof and a plurality of compartments open at the top and bounded by walls extending above the said marginal flange, and

(b) a service plate adapted to be applied over the said receptacle in inverted position to serve as a cover for the said compartments with the rim of the service plate in releasable snap-in engagement with the said retention groove and with the interior surface of the service plate abutting the upper edges of the said walls to seal the compartments of the said receptacle from each other and from the surrounding atmosphere.

2. A container according to claim 1, wherein said service plate has outstanding flange means spaced vertically from the marginal flange thereof whereby said outstanding flange means and the marginal flange of said receptacle are engageable for separating the receptacle and the service plate.

3. A container for use in handling, dispensing and serving prepared foods substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawing.

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COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

1 SHEET

This drawing is a reproduction of the Original on a reduced scale

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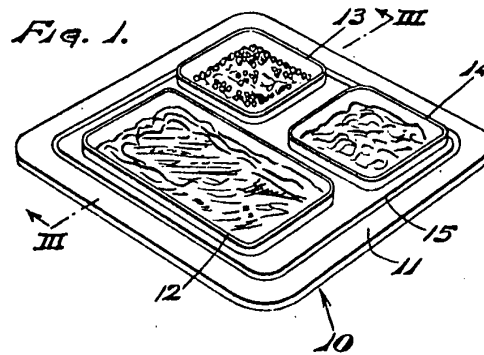


Fig. 2.

